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## **STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PRIORITIES**

**Report by Director Infrastructure and Environment & Director Resilient Communities**

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### **SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**29 June 2023**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides Elected Members with an overview of current transport policy in Scotland and indicates how the Council is developing short, medium and longer term actions to help deliver national and regional transport strategy aspirations at a local level.**
- 1.2 The second version of the National Transport Strategy (NTS) was published in February 2020 and sets out the national ambition for the next twenty years, while coordinating objectives and outcomes with planning, economic development and Net Zero strategies to provide a core set of principles for all new development.
- 1.3 The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) which was developed by the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) was approved by Local Authority Members in 2022 and by Transport Scotland in March 2023. The document sets out how we can deliver transport priorities across the South East of Scotland and links directly to the NTS and local priorities.
- 1.4 The Scottish Borders is in the unique position where we are partners in two Growth Deals and have a South of Scotland Enterprise Agency to support our ambitions. The key national and regional transport policy documents are supplemented by the Regional Economic Strategy for the South (RES) and The Edinburgh and South East of Scotland City Region Deal (City Deal) along with the associated Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF) provides a strong commitment to improving transport in rural areas.
- 1.5 Scottish Borders Council has produced local transport strategy documents in the past and in 2015 a Main Issues Report recommended that a Local Access & Transport Strategy (LATS) for the Scottish Borders be refreshed once all of the national and regional strategies were in place. It is hoped that the initiation of a new LATS will commence later in the year.
- 1.6 Even in the absence of an up to date LATS, there are still a number of strategically important projects being taken forward that deliver national and regional ambition, help to improve transport connectivity in our area and look to support the Council's Net-Zero commitments.

- 1.7 The Bus Network Review is the first full scale review of bus services for circa 30 years and is using data from operators and local businesses to help identify and design services that better meet the needs of our communities and try to grow patronage in a sustained period of funding pressures to subsidise services. Changes are likely to include the removal of duplication and delivering services that will make a difference to local communities. It is proposed to have a number of Elected Member briefings during the summer and bring forward proposals to Council in August/September 2023.
- 1.8 The development of Active Travel (Cycling, Walking and Wheeling) throughout Scotland is a key plank of national and regional transport policy and The Scottish Government has currently committed to spend at least £320 million, or 10% of the total transport budget on active travel by 2024-25 (up from £39 million in 2017/18). However, in order to access this additional funding, Scottish Borders Council will need an Active Travel Team and develop a bespoke Active Travel Strategy for the area.
- 1.9 The Electric Vehicle Charging Expansion Plan acknowledges that Transport Scotland are transitioning away from publicly funding the public charging network and have provided support for Local Authorities to procure private sector investment in infrastructure, operations and services to grow the uptake of EV vehicles in Scotland. A proposed model has been built for the Scottish Borders using significant community engagement to create a proposal that would see an initial charging network delivered to 100 communities in the region, creating an equitable distribution of infrastructure, while demonstrating a viable investment for the private sector. It is proposed to bring the recommendations to Council in August/September 2023, to allow the procurement phase to commence later this year.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **2.1 I recommend that Scottish Borders Council:-**

- (a) Notes the status of Transport Policy in Scotland and the influence on regional and local actions;**
- (b) Notes the progress on developing an updated Local Access and Transport Strategy in 2023;**
- (c) Notes the progress on the Bus Network review and agrees for a report to be submitted to Council in Autumn 2023;**
- (d) Agrees to have a number of members briefings during the summer on the recommendations of the Bus Network review, based on locality areas;**
- (e) Notes the progress on Active Travel Development in the region;**
- (f) Notes the progress on the Electric Vehicle Charging Expansion Plan and identifies any additional briefings required before recommendations are brought to a future Council meeting;**
- (g) Agrees for a report on the Electric Vehicle Charging Expansion Plan to be submitted to the August or September Council meeting.**

### 3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Since 2020 there has been a systematic development of transport policy in Scotland to dovetail into other national priorities such as net-zero, equalities, planning and economic development. The National Transport Strategy (NTS) provides the overarching Scottish Government transport ambition and the current version was published in February 2020. This document sets out the national aspirations for transport over the next twenty years, based on four key priorities:

- Reducing inequalities;
- Taking climate action;
- Helping to deliver inclusive economic growth; and
- Improving health & wellbeing.

3.2 The NTS is a key component of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). All of these documents share common priorities including:

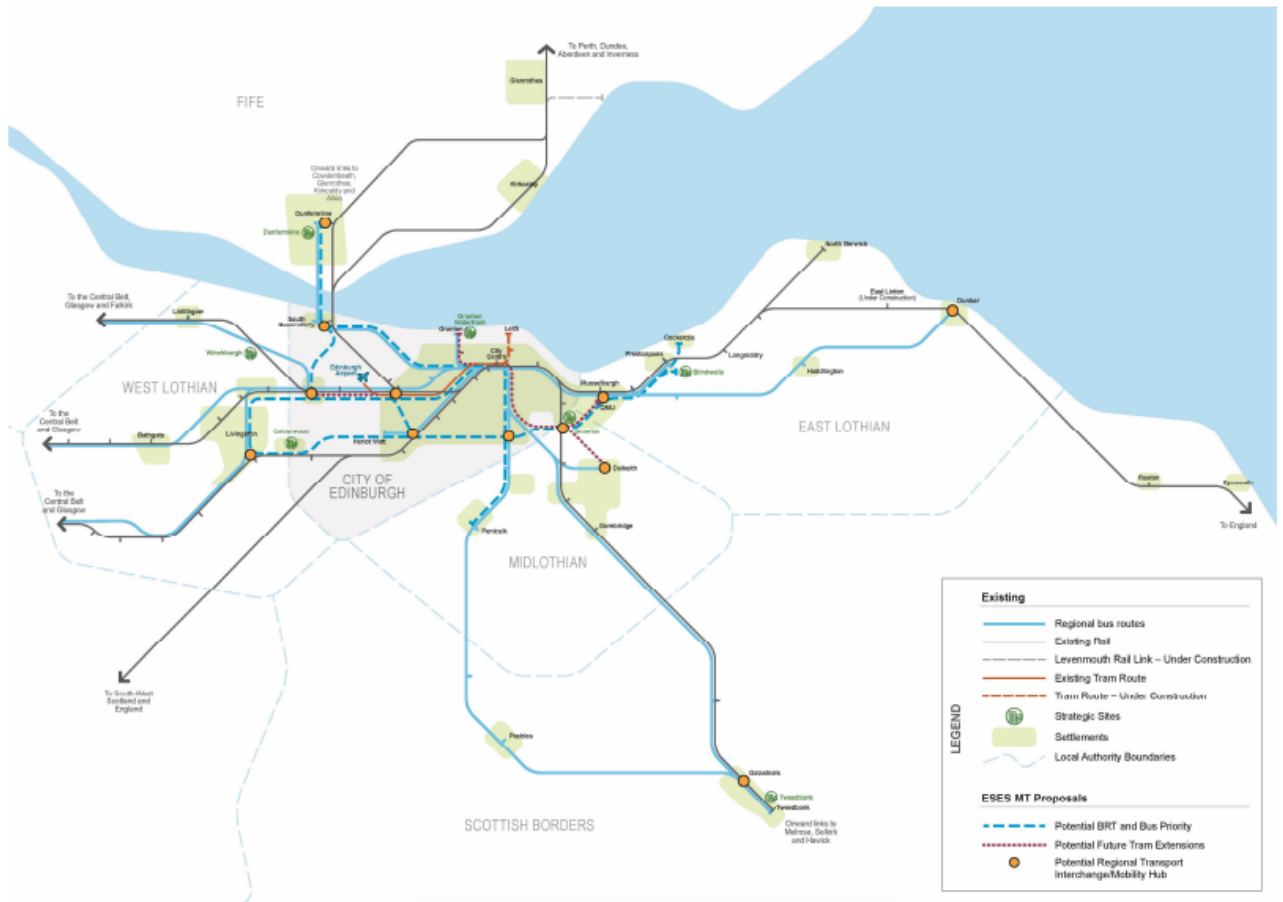
- Maximising the use of existing infrastructure;
- Enabling modal shift away from single occupancy car journeys, with the promotion of the new transport hierarchy that prioritises walking & cycling and shared transport;
- A proposed reduction in car kilometres of 20% by 2030;
- 'Infrastructure first' principles for new development (develop transport solutions at the start of the design process, and maximising the use of existing infrastructure and services); and
- Development of 20 minute neighbourhoods or a rural equivalent so that communities are in close proximity to services, education and employment, thus minimising vehicular journeys. [What is a 20-minute neighbourhood? - Sustrans.org.uk](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-is-a-20-minute-neighbourhood/)

3.3 To support the ambition of the NTS, Transport Scotland published the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) in December 2022. This document tries to identify the key projects for national infrastructure investment over the next twenty years. There were no specific strategic projects identified in the Scottish Borders, but the commitment to the Borders Railway Extension in terms of feasibility work was included. Galashiels has also been identified as a strategic transport interchange hub in the 'Mass Rapid Transit' commitment for Edinburgh, the Lothian's and Fife (Figure 1 Below).

3.4 There are a number of generic initiatives in STPR2 that are available to most Local Authority areas, for instance:

- Active travel funding;
- Decarbonising transport;
- Single ticketing solutions; and
- Improving rest and welfare facilities for hauliers.

These commitments all provide the opportunity to leverage funding into the Scottish Borders once a new Local Access & Transport Strategy (LATS) for the Scottish Borders has been developed.



**FIGURE 1 - Indicative Extent of Edinburgh and South East Scotland Mass Transit**

3.5 At a regional level, Scottish Borders is part of the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) with seven other Local Authority Members. This partnership has recently produced a new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), which sets out a framework of ambition and actions at a regional level until 2035, and will help deliver the national aspirations of the NTS within a regional context.

The Key Priorities of the RTS include:

- Infrastructure first development;
- Safe active travel;
- Enhancing access to public transport;
- Enhancing and extending bus & train services;
- Reallocation of road-space for the transport hierarchy;
- Improving integration between transport modes;
- Decarbonising transport;
- Improving freight movement;
- Working toward zero road deaths;
- Reducing car kilometres; and
- Working with partners to try and place development in the right areas to aid and enhance public transport and active travel options.

3.6 Also at a regional level, Scottish Borders Council participates in two growth deals, Borderlands and Edinburgh and South East Scotland. The Council also has a very productive partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council and South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) in the South of Scotland where a Regional Economic Partnership has been established. Two of the key documents recently published by the two partnerships are the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF). Both strategies align with transport ambitions to support economic development, net-zero and equalities across the regions and have key actions identified to deliver these ambitions. Scottish Borders Council has been involved throughout the development of these strategies to help ensure that rural issues and opportunities are captured.

The key themes outlined in both strategy documents are:

- Mobility and sustainable transport are central to achieving economic goals;
- An 'infrastructure first' approach to deliver a sustainably connected region is recommended;
- The key challenges and barriers in the South of Scotland include transport and digital connectivity. However, there are also a range of opportunities to help address these issues primarily through the implementation of specific projects contained within the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal such as the promotion of the Borders Railway Extension and the potential of extending the Workforce Mobility project across the whole of the region; and
- Further investment in digital connectivity across the South of Scotland is also planned through the development of the Borderlands Digital Infrastructure Programme and building on the existing investment in 4G and 5G mobile technology currently being carried out at the Crichton Rural 5G Connectivity Hub which will be transformational.

3.7 At a local level, the previous edition of the LATS (Main Issues Report – 2015) recommended that the Council waited until national and regional strategies were updated before committing to a new strategy document. This approach was agreed to ensure that the new strategy is contemporary and can set the medium and long term vision for transport in our region, within the context of local issues and opportunities. It is hoped that an update to the LATS will be initiated later this year.

3.8 There is sufficient clarity within national and regional strategy documents to help identify the key priorities for the Scottish Borders, while helping to address developing policies such as Community Wealth building, Tackling Poverty and Net Zero.

We believe the key priorities for the Scottish Borders should be:

- Bus and Rail improvements;
- Active Travel development;
- Electric Vehicle charging expansion; and
- Alternative fuels.

3.9 Scottish Borders Council also approved a Climate Change Route Map in June 2021 and an associated two year delivery plan in March 2022. Decarbonising our Transport Use is identified as one of five key themes,

with transport accounting for 34% of emissions in the Scottish Borders. The route map sets out some short term actions that will contribute to help deliver net zero. These actions and outputs will be considered in the new LATS.

- 3.10 Transport has also been raised as a key strategic priority with Scottish Ministers at the Convention of the South of Scotland (COSS) and Transport, Housing and Skills have been identified as the three key priority areas for delivery of action in the Regional Economic Strategy over the next 2 years.
- 3.11 As outlined above there are several key partners who have identified transport as a key priority within their organisation. SEStran, who have led the development of the RTS, aims to lead the development of a transportation system for South East Scotland, enabling business to function effectively and provide everyone living in the region with improved access to healthcare, education, public services and employment opportunities. They have identified EV, active travel and bus services as three priorities that they need to focus upon. Similarly, SOSE, the economic and community development agency responsible for Dumfries & Galloway and the Scottish Borders recognise that transport is a key enabler to economic development in the South of Scotland. To make meaningful and proactive progress in positively addressing key transport priorities, working in partnership is essential, deploying our collective resources effectively and using the range of skills that we each have available.

#### 4 BUS NETWORK REVIEW

- 4.1 With support and funding from the City Deal Workforce Mobility Project, the Passenger Transport Team have been able to undertake a full bus network review for the first time in 20-30 years. However, unlike any other review of Borders routes this review has focused on collating and utilising multiple data sources to support informed decisions on how to optimise the services for existing passengers, while identifying improvements that better support the needs of our communities to grow patronage.
- 4.2 The review identifies several outcomes that a new network would need to deliver and support, while recognising the important role the bus network plays in the economic performance of the region through supporting community's access to employment, training, welfare and leisure activities. The outcomes are:
- **Reduce inequalities:** provide fair and equitable access to key services, easy to use for all and affordable for all;
  - **Take climate action:** contribute to net zero targets by reducing net carbon emissions from transport;
  - **Maximise the efficiency and effectiveness** of the publicly subsidised bus services in the Scottish Borders.
  - **Help deliver inclusive economic growth and community wealth building** by linking people to jobs and customers to businesses;
  - **Improve health and wellbeing** by connecting people to communities and enabling healthy transport choices.
- 4.3 The review involved a significant community and bus operator engagement exercise with public surveys, community Council meeting (grouped by locality) and operator discussions, which ran through December 2022 and

January 2023. The feedback from the consultation has been incorporated in to the network analysis and helped shape the recommendations.

4.4 The recommendations of the Bus Network Review will be brought to Council in autumn 2023, but can be summarised as follows:

The current core network is fundamentally 'fit for purpose' (within the funding that is available), however there are opportunities to remove inefficiencies and improve areas to better serve the demand identified by data from our communities;

- There is a strong need to improve town services to support the shift patterns of business and provide services that accommodate earlier and later shift patterns (supported by the workforce data);
- There is workforce data and mobile phone data that supports improved connectivity to the Borders General Hospital and existing Central Borders travel infrastructure (e.g. Tweedbank Railway Station), especially from Galashiels, Peebles, Selkirk and Hawick;
- The role of Demand Responsive Transport and Taxi Bus will be important in the new network to support more rural communities access the main settlements and support the concept of '20 minute neighbourhoods', but in a rural context.
- Community Transport plays an important role in the current network and there will be opportunities to enhance the service in the future. A Service Level Agreement has recently been developed with Community Transport providers, which forms part of a wider aim to develop a stronger/closer working relationship. The Council will continue to work with partners to develop the service to ensure it remains sustainable and meets service user's needs.
- The existing bus network provides a positive economic return on investment by Scottish Borders Council and commercial operators; and
- In the first 11 months of operation the PINGO service provided £2.20 of economic return on investment for every £1 invested by Scottish Borders Council. This will continue to be monitored through the second year of the pilot; and
- The Council should develop a taxi-bus services for 'rural' and 'remote rural' areas where the demand does not support a full demand responsive transport provision. A taxi-bus is a smaller and more flexible service in areas where the infrastructure does not facilitate bus movements or the demand is intermittent; and
- The Council should continue to collect and analyse data from operators, the community and business to continually review and optimise the bus network.

4.5 The overall proposals will highlight what the optimum network would be for the Scottish Borders, while recognising the constraints on budgets, it will also highlight what can currently be funded, with no change to the 2023/24 budget in future years. This will enable the Council to understand the funding gap, so that an exercise can be undertaken to identify alternative funding sources (increase passenger income, external funding, community funding etc.) that could be used to deliver the optimum network for the Scottish Borders.

- 4.6 In advance of a report to Council it is proposed to undertake a series of Elected Member briefing sessions over the summer (by locality area) to review the proposals of the Bus Network Review and demonstrate how the consultation and data has informed the proposals.

## **5 ACTIVE TRAVEL DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.1 The development of Active Travel (Cycling, Walking and Wheeling) throughout Scotland is a key priority of national and regional transport policy and the Scottish Government has currently committed to spend at least £320 million, or 10% of the total transport budget, on active travel by 2024-25 (up from £39 million in 2017/18). However, in order to access this additional funding, Scottish Borders Council will need an Active Travel Team and develop a bespoke Active Travel Strategy for the area. It is worth noting that the Scottish Government is reviewing funding for active travel at the current time and the current position may change.
- 5.2 The Scottish Borders is well placed to deliver Active Travel proposals and this policy decision allows the Council to play to our strengths. Especially considering our involvement in the UCI Cycling World Championships; the recent development of a South of Scotland Cycling Strategy; the recent announcement of the Kirkpatrick Coast to Coast Cycle Route from Stranraer to Eyemouth; and Destination Tweed.
- 5.3 Scottish Borders Council has an interim strategic plan for Active Travel routes that aims to try and link together a number of our towns and villages and this strategic plan primarily tries to utilise the network of former railway lines that crisscross our area as much as possible. A plan showing the interim strategic plan for Active Travel has been provided in **Appendix A**
- 5.4 The Council has recently issued a call for projects to our communities and we would be happy to receive shared access proposals to feed into this process in order that we can gauge local support and plan for potential future funding opportunities.
- 5.6 The Council also has access to Employee travel data through the Workforce Mobility project that has been used to inform the Bus Network Review and can be utilised to identify key active travel links for key employment areas and education zones, or to provide connections to the existing bus and rail networks.

## **6 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING EXPANSION**

- 6.1 Transport Scotland and Scottish Futures Trust published guidance in July 2021 for Local Authorities to develop strategies to deliver private sector investment for electric vehicle charging across Scotland. These strategies can then be used to access funding from Transport Scotland from 2023-26, to leverage private-sector investment. This new approach supports Transport Scotland transitioning away from the public funding and delivery of electric vehicle charging in Scotland.
- 6.2 Scottish Borders Council was successful in obtaining funding in June 2021 through the UK Community Renewal Fund to deliver an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Feasibility Study & Expansion Plan for the Scottish Borders. Scottish Borders Council commissioned Turner & Townsend and Mott MacDonald in December 2021 to undertake a regional assessment of demand growth over a ten year period, identifying the infrastructure required to meet the new charging demand.



- 6.3 A key priority of the project has been to maximise the distribution of charging network equitably across the region, marketing the region as a whole, to avoid the private sector 'cherry picking' the most economically advantageous sites and leaving more rural locations without public charging infrastructure. This has been prioritised above the Council sharing any risks, income and expenditure with the private sector EV charging operators.
- 6.4 A commercial analysis has recently been undertaken and options for a delivery model have been developed. This will help Scottish Borders Council procure private sector investment to design, build, operate and maintain the EV Charging Infrastructure for the future. Within any new contracts it is important that Scottish Borders Council have the ability to influence the charger locations and tariff setting to ensure an accessible network is delivered in our region.
- 6.5 Once the private sector network is in place, it will be the operator's responsibility to support and stimulate growth in the region. This will include the incorporation of new technologies and the continued engagement with communities to develop the network as demand grows.
- 6.6 It is important to highlight that the project team have undertaken two rounds of market testing as part of the Expansion Plan development and have published a Prior Information Notice (PIN) on Public Contracts Scotland to seek formal responses of interest from the market. To date there is positive interest from EV network investors, which will hopefully be reinforced once replies are submitted to the Prior Information Notice in July 2023. Also, discussions are ongoing with other local authorities to identify partnerships to engage with the market and leverage efficiencies and economies of scale.
- 6.7 A draft application for funding was submitted to Transport Scotland and Scottish Futures Trust in May 2023 to help support the delivery of the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Expansion Plan in our region. This application also included the principle of Transport Scotland funding the Council's delivery costs to procure the private sector operator investment. A response is expected at the end of the summer and will influence the programme of bring recommendations to Council.
- 6.8 As the model for delivering private sector investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure on a regional scale is relatively new in the UK, with a few Local Authorities in England successfully delivered networks, Scottish Futures Trust are gathering best practice examples and creating a model specification and conditions of contract for Scottish Local Authorities to develop and use. This suite of documents is not complete yet and will be a critical element to influence the delivery programme.
- 6.9 It is currently proposed that the recommendations on the preferred contract model and procurement strategy is brought to Council later in the year, following feedback from the PIN. This would hopefully allow a preferred project to commence in early 2024.

## **7 BORDERS RAILWAY UPDATE**

- 7.1 The Borders Railway Feasibility Study is a £10m project to develop a shared understanding of the benefits and challenges of options to extend the Borders Railway from Tweedbank to Carlisle via Hawick. This will include the undertaking of feasibility work to further develop the business case for the

reinstatement of the railway. The proposed investment by the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal involves contributions of £5m from the Department for Transport in England and £5m from Transport Scotland on the Scottish side of the border.

- 7.2 Following recent representations to Scottish and UK Governments by the leaders of all the Borderlands partners, it was agreed that the project could now proceed through the existing business case process associated with the Borderlands Growth Deal. Once the series of reports required by both Scottish and UK Governments as part of the deal process has been agreed, the process of drawing down the funding can be fully initiated.
- 7.3 As part of the business case process, we are intending to employ an officer to help lead and project manage this work and we also intend to initiate a working group with local partners and local politicians later in the summer to help us move forward in a planned and coherent way that keeps all partners up to date and informed of progress.

## 8 SHORT/MEDIUM/LONG TERM PRIORITIES FOR THE REGION

8.1 As indicated in section 3.8, the current transport policy agenda has provided Scottish Borders Council with a direction of travel and the officers believe the four key priority areas are:

- Bus and Rail improvements;
- Active Travel development;
- Electric Vehicle charging expansion; and
- Alternative fuels.

8.2 Based on these priorities, a summary of potential current priority actions over the short, medium and longer term, along with potential funding sources has been provided in Table 8.1 below.

**TABLE 8.1 – Short/Medium/Long Term priorities**

Theme	Priority	Description	Possible Funding Sources
<b>SHORT TERM 1-3 Years</b>			
Bus and Rail improvements	Stabilise the bus network viability.	Following the loss of patronage during COVID19, the recent removal of additional Scottish Government funding, and increasing costs, the bus network is under huge financial pressure that could see significant changes without a coordinated response. The Bus Network Review provides the opportunity to optimise the network and identify opportunities to increase patronage and commercial services without impact on the end users. Maintaining current levels of funding would support longer term confidence for operators. We will also explore and progress viable partnership opportunities to improve regional connections.	Private Sector investment, Scottish Borders Council Subsidy Budget, community funding (windfarms)
Active Travel development	Develop Local Access &	Work in partnership with Sustrans to jointly fund a 1 FTE resources within Scottish	Initially Sustrans and Scottish

	Transport Strategy Action Plan	Borders Council to help develop the LATS. This will hopefully work with communities to identify and prioritise potential projects for the region and help to deliver the aspirations for a fully integrated transport system that support our communities and the journey to Net-Zero	Borders Council. Future project funding from national, regional and private sector opportunities
Active Travel development	Community 'Call for Projects'	Communities throughout the Scottish Borders have been asked to identify active travel routes that would support and benefit their local area.	Scottish Borders Council, Sustrans, Transport Scotland & Community Groups
Electric Vehicle charging expansion	Deliver Feasibility & Expansion Plan	Develop an EV charging demand model for the Scottish Borders for the next ten year, that collates local data, rather than using urban-based national data sets. Develop a proposal that creates an equitable charging network for the region that is financial attractive to the private sector and can be supported by initial Capital funding from Transport Scotland.	UK Community renewal Fund and Transport Scotland EV Expansion Plan funding.
Alternative fuels	Decarbonisation of SBC Fleet	The smart grid project has seen SBC increase the electric vehicle charging (EVC) capacity with the installation of 64 more charging points across our Newtown St Boswells offices and main depot building. Currently our fleet has 60 electric vehicles with another 19 due to be delivered and deployed across the fleet later this year. By 2024, we expect to have replaced 45% of all sub-3.5 tonne vehicles used with electric models. We have begun to consider alternative fuel options for our heavier fleet which and we will look to pilot new available technology and fuels on a proportion of our fleet.	Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Government
Bus and Rail improvements	Taxibus Trial	Trial Taxibus service in towns and remote rural areas where services are limited or do not currently exist. Feedback from the trial will help determine how Taxibus services could be incorporated into the Borders Network.	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)
<b>MEDIUM TERM 4-7 Years</b>			
Bus and Rail improvements	Smart network	Building on the use of data with the development of smart ticketing, single integrated ticket solutions and participation in a regional or national Mobility as a Service platform to better integrate multiple modes of transport to improve the experience for the passenger.	Scottish Borders Council, SOSE, SEStran, Transport Scotland
Bus and Rail improvements	Borders Railway Extension - Feasibility Study	Delivery of a feasibility study that identifies the preferred route for an extended railway line between Tweedbank and Carlisle.	UK & Scottish Governments
Bus and Rail improvements	Electrification of the Borders	There is a commitment for the first phase of the Borders Railway to be fully electrified in	Transport Scotland

	Railway	the short to medium term.	
Active Travel development	Development Funding	Utilising the Local Access & Transport Strategy Action Plan in relation to Active Travel priorities, to access Transport Scotland funding to develop Active travel projects for construction	Transport Scotland, SUstrans, UK SPF
Electric Vehicle charging expansion	Procure and Deliver the investment in EV Charging Expansion Plan	Once a preferred route to market is agreed with Scottish Borders Council the regional will be marketed as a single opportunity for investment to private operators to deliver and commence operation of an expanded EV charging network by 2026/27	Transport Scotland & private Sector
Alternative fuels	Decarbonisation of SBC Fleet	Continue to deliver alternative fuel solution for the remaining small fleet and above 3.5 tonnes. This will comply with the obligation on Local authorities not to purchase any new Internal Combustion Engine fleet after 2025.	Scottish Borders Council & Transport Scotland
<b>LONG TERM 8+ Years</b>			
Bus and Rail improvements	Bus Infrastructure / fleet Improvements	Investment in strategic travel hubs to support communities accessing the public transport network. Decarbonising the bus fleet (SBC and operators) with the appropriate technology and fuel for larger vehicles. Embracing new technology/solution with the development of drones	Scottish Borders Council & Transport Scotland, private sector.
Bus and Rail improvements	Borders Railway Expansion	Deliver the extension of the Borders Railway from Tweedbank to Carlisle and examine opportunities to further expand the Rail Network in the South of Scotland.	UK & Scottish Governments
Active Travel development	Infrastructure delivery	Delivery of multiple active travel routes through the region to support long and short distance journeys	Transport Scotland, Sustrans, Scottish Borders Council & Local Communities

## 9 IMPLICATIONS

### 9.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

### 9.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) The Bus Network Review will propose changes to the bus network at a time that coincides with the retendering of the subsidised bus network. To deliver the long term efficiencies committed to with budget reductions, it is proposed to start the procurement process of the new services once the approval of the Council is obtained in autumn 2023. This will allow sufficient time to re-procure services and inform the Transport Commissioner of the network changes (70 days in advance) to allow the new network to operate from 1 April 2024. If there is a delay to the approval process this will negatively affect the new network operation date of 1 April 2024 and the ability to deliver

financial savings in 2024/25. Further detail will be provided in the report to Council in August/September 2023.

- (b) Scottish Government has indicated that significant additional funding for Active Travel will be available in subsequent financial years, but the key risk for the Council is that an Active Travel Team and an Active Travel Strategy will be required to access this funding.
- (c) The current funding package from Transport Scotland for the EV charging expansion expires in March 2026, so the full infrastructure investment will need to be delivered at that point to enable this funding to be used. The network has been design based on existing electricity network capacity, but there are areas of further network development required. If the procurement phase of the project is delayed from early 2024, then the risk of the current spare capacity being utilised increases and the timescale for using Transport Scotland funding reduces. This could increase overall delivery costs and leave a shortfall in the initial Transport Scotland capital funding that would either have to be underwritten by Scottish Borders Council or other external funding identified. Further detail will be provided in the report to Council in August/September 2023.

### 9.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

- (a) The Council has a statutory obligation to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic (age, disability, gender re-assignment, trans/transgender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race groups, religion or belief, sex-gender identity, and sexual orientation) and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who do not. This involves tackling prejudice and building understanding. These assessments have been undertaken on a 'project by project' basis and a summary will be provided when reports are taken to Council committees.

### 9.4 **Sustainable Development Goals**

These assessments have been undertaken on a 'project by project' basis and a summary will be provided when reports are taken to Council committees.

### 9.5 **Climate Change**

These assessments have been undertaken on a 'project by project' basis and a summary will be provided when reports are taken to Council committees.

### 9.6 **Rural Proofing**

NA

### 9.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

### 9.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No proposed changes required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

## 10 CONSULTATION

10.1 The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications were consulted and all comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

### Approved by

**John Curry**  
**Jenni Craig**

**Director Infrastructure and Environment**  
**Director Resilient Communities**

### Author(s)

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**Background Papers:** [insert list of background papers used in compiling report]

**Previous Minute Reference:** [insert last Minute reference (if any)]

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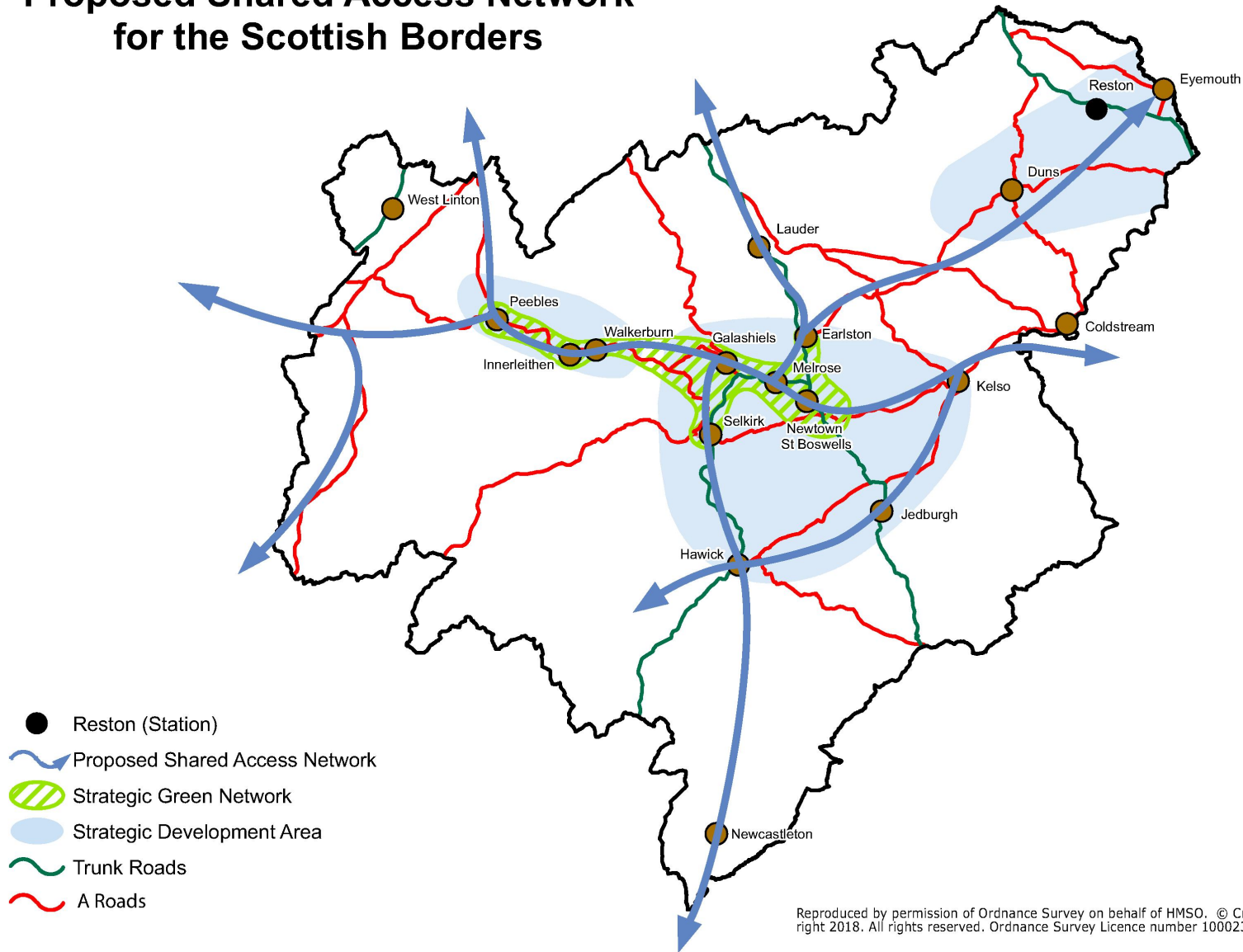
Contact us at [insert name, address, telephone number, e-mail]

# Appendix A – Scottish Borders Strategic Plan for Active Travel

## Proposed Shared Access Network for the Scottish Borders



1:500,000 (A4)



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